

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources & Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 7 July 2021

LOCATION: Online

TITLE: Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2026

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To review and recommend Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2026

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: To review new strategy

BACKGROUND:

The vision of the current Corporate Strategy states that *“Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money sustainable bilingual public services that support a strong economy and healthy environment while promoting well-being in our people and our communities.”* It is recognised that our employees are key to the delivery of this vision and have a direct impact on the quality of services provided to the residents of Ceredigion. As one of the largest employers in the county, with a large number of our workforce also residents, improving the health and wellbeing of our employees will impact on improvements in health and wellbeing across Ceredigion.

Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2026

This strategy has been developed following one employee survey conducted just before the Covid-19 pandemic started and one in December 2020. The aim of the strategy is to improve not only individual wellbeing but also, as a result, that of the Council’s teams and services.

The Strategy sets out key goals, under five separate areas identified as ‘pillars of wellbeing’:

- Positive Environments
- Policies and Practice
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Culture and behaviour

The initial focus will be on promoting healthier lifestyle behaviours, a commitment to sign the Time to Change Wales Pledge (working towards removing mental health stigma), a programme to introduce Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Champions across the

Council, and the creation of a Health and Wellbeing Steering Group with the aim of achieving The Corporate Health Standard (Bronze) within the first two years.

The strategy will be driven the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer in People & Organisation, but with collaborative working across the Council.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Summary:

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To recommend the approval of the Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2026

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Contact Name:

Geraint Edwards

Designation:

Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation (Interim)

Date of Report:

15/06/2021

Acronyms:

Employee Health and Wellbeing 2021-2026 Strategy

1 Introduction

Our Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 outlines the following vision for Ceredigion,
“Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money sustainable bilingual public services that support a strong economy and healthy environment while promoting wellbeing in our people and our communities.”

It is recognised that our employees are key to the delivery of this vision and have a direct impact on the quality of services provided to the residents of Ceredigion. We understand that when our employees are healthy, motivated and have a sense of wellbeing, the experience and outcomes for our residents improves. As one of the largest employers in the county, with a large number of our workforce also residents, improving the health and wellbeing of our employees will support improvements in health and wellbeing across Ceredigion.

Growing evidence shows that the workplace can be an effective place to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Being in work can offer financial rewards, social connections, satisfaction and a sense of belonging, meaning and purpose. Dame Carol Black's report 'Building a Healthier Tomorrow' (2008) evidences that an employee who has purpose, feels valued by their employer and peers, operates in a supportive culture and understands how their contribution helps organisational success, is more productive. This has benefits for the individual, the team and the organisation as a whole.

2 Vision

Develop a culture which promotes and embeds positive social, physical and mental wellbeing behaviours in order that our employee community have the internal resources and resilience to fully embrace their work and personal life.

Develop an employee community that shares responsibility for health and wellbeing, identifying difficulties early, to accelerate targeted, effective and timely interventions.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development define employee wellbeing as

‘Creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation.’
(CIPD 2016)

3 Supporting Principles

Employee Health and Wellbeing is driven by our People and Organisation Service, with direction provided by our Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer.

This strategy will be delivered and embedded through collaborative working partnerships across our organisation, including but not limited to a Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, Mental Health First Aiders and Health and Wellbeing

Champions. It is intended that this strategy informs the work carried out to meet Public Health Wales' Corporate Health Standard.

This ambitious strategy, though with high aspirations, is intended to be achieved over the next 5 years.

For the purpose of this strategy, health and wellbeing are seen as embracing the whole person – physical and mental health both within and external to the workplace.

“Health is greater than simply an absence of ill health and disease, and is defined as a feeling of physical, emotional and psychological wellness.”

World Health Organisation definition (1948)

4 The national context

The CIPD's 2020 Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey, shows that nearly two-thirds of organisations take a strategic approach to wellbeing. Nevertheless, over a third of public sector respondents report their organisation is much more reactive than proactive. The key themes that emerged from the survey, which can help to inform our Health and Wellbeing Strategy are:

- **Presenteeism** and **'leaveism'** are common. 'Presenteeism' (people coming to work when unwell) and 'leaveism' (eg people working outside contracted hours, or using annual leave to work/for illness) are critical indicators of the 'health' of an organisation's culture. These unhealthy workplace practices have serious potential implications for employees' physical and mental health, as well as for productivity.
- **Mental health conditions** are prevalent and increasing. 3/5 of public sector respondents had seen an increase in reported common mental health conditions among employees. Moreover, mental ill health remained among the top causes of long term absence for all sectors.
- **Stress-related absence** were particularly prevalent in the public sector. Over 2/5 of public sector organisations report that stress-related absence (most commonly caused by heavy workloads) had increased over the last 12 months (44%, compared with 36% of the private and 33% of non-profits). Stress is the most common cause of long-term absence in the public sector.
- **Absence** levels are considerably higher in the public sector. The average level of absence in the public sector was eight days which was considerably higher than in other sectors (private services sector: 4.3 days; manufacturing and production: 6.3 days; non-profit sector: 5.2 days).

5 Health and Wellbeing at Ceredigion

In 2020 data regarding the health and wellbeing of the Council's employees was collected on two occasions.

Health Needs Assessment

A Health Needs Assessment was conducted during February and March 2020. The data collected from this Health Needs Assessment served to provide a baseline to

benchmark activities and interventions. The survey was completed by **46%** of the workforce. Data was not collected from staff employed by School Governing Bodies.

The areas covered in the health needs assessment reflect those included in 'The Corporate Health Standard' which serves as a national mark of quality for health and wellbeing, in the workplace, in Wales. These are essentially what may be termed as 'lifestyle' health behaviours.

Questions around workplace culture were also asked in order to gauge some of the impact the organisation itself may have on an individual's or team's wellbeing. Those with line manager responsibilities were given an additional set of questions to assess their levels of confidence and aptitude, when approaching issues around health and wellbeing, with those they manage. These questions may also help to ascertain any barriers to these activities, which they may perceive to be present.

Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey

A further workforce pulse survey was conducted in December 2020, focussing on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on health, wellbeing and working lives. The survey also sought the workforce's thoughts on the information and provision available to them. Staff employed by School Governing Bodies were also invited to take part in the survey. The survey was completed by 18% of the workforce.

Key Findings

Health and Wellbeing

Health Needs Assessment

77%

Health generally good or very good

28%

150 minutes or more of moderate physical activity per week

72%

Quite or very satisfied with life

15%

Smoke daily or sometimes

31%

Eat 5 or more portions of fruit and veg per day

26%

Drink alcohol 2 or more times per week

Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey

57%

Mental wellbeing as good or very good

57%

Feel the Coronavirus has led to a decline in their wellbeing

47%

Are experiencing social isolation

Information and Support

Health Needs Assessment

70%

Preferred to receive information and support via email

64%

Quite or very likely to engage in walking activities

60%

Quite or very likely to engage in taster sessions at our leisure facilities

61%

Quite or very likely to engage in physical activity at work if shower/changing facilities available

Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey

69%

Know how and where to access help for their wellbeing

58%

Feel the information they have accessed is supportive and helpful

65%

Felt they had help and support available to them

Culture

Health Needs Assessment

76%

Satisfied or very satisfied with work life

75%

Satisfied or very satisfied with workplace

70%

Agree or strongly agree communication is good

78%

Agree or strongly agree there are opportunities to develop new skills

60%

Found job quite or very stressful

81%

Attended work when they felt that they were too sick to work

Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey

63%

Agree or strongly agree the Council cares about my wellbeing

65%

Agree or strongly agree support available if feeling stressed and anxious at work

Line Management

Health Needs Assessment

88%

Agree or strongly agree can have 1:1 meetings with line manager

Coronavirus Health and Wellbeing Survey

78%

Agree or strongly agree that they have enough contact with their line manager

87%

Agree or strongly agree there are opportunities to develop friendships

74%

Agree or strongly agree team are communicating well and staying connected

71%

Agree or strongly agree they feel listened to

88%

Agree or strongly agree they would be supported to provide care for a family member

The data collected from our workforce highlights the importance of meeting the health and wellbeing needs of our employees. In doing so we need to ensure the provision is relevant, meaningful, responsive and accessible to all the workforce.

This strategy aims to improve not only individual wellbeing but also that of our teams/services, the Council as a whole and the community in which we live and work.

Most importantly, it is only right that we strive to become an employer of choice and that we pro-actively support the wellbeing of our staff - our greatest resource.

6 Pillars of Health and Wellbeing



Positive environments

We will build, improve and maintain positive and supportive working environments across our organisation. This will be achieved with the establishment of governance by the introduction of a Health and Wellbeing steering/working group with representation from across the organisation and a network of wellbeing champions who will foster and promote a supportive working environment. This activity will be co-ordinated by the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer.

Goals 2021

- We will create and embed a network of wellbeing champions to promote wellbeing across our organisation.
- We will explore the benefits of completing an organisational risk assessment to identify where the stressors are and create an action plan to manage these.
- We will create the governance, including the establishment of a Health and Wellbeing Steering Group (to include representation from Leadership Group, Health and Safety and Trade Unions) around our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to enable to the development of wellbeing across our organisation.

2023

- We will have embedded our network of Wellbeing champions, who will foster a positive and supportive environment for our employee community.
- They will facilitate and document organisational wellbeing activity, working collaboratively

Policies and practice

We will embed wellbeing in to our HR policies, people practices and leadership and management programmes, putting people as the focus. Our wellbeing strategy will enable managers and leaders to cultivate teams that foster wellbeing. We will build, improve and maintain positive and supportive working environments across our organisation.

Goals

2021

- Wellbeing will be embedded into our leadership and management programmes and also through embedding in our people practices. Our wellbeing strategy will enable managers and leaders to cultivate teams that foster wellbeing.
- We will review our HR policies with the intention of including aspects of wellbeing, making them more accessible and user friendly, putting our people at the heart of our policies.

2023

- Our leadership and management development programmes will have wellbeing at their heart. This will be evidenced in the way that our managers are leading their people.
- The culture across our organisation will be positive and embracing of change and difference
- People will be open to Wellbeing as this will be part of their everyday thinking. They will be able to access the information they need in a way that meets their needs to ensure inclusive provision.

Healthy lifestyles

We will focus on the six aspects of having a healthy lifestyle, as adopted in The Corporate Health Standard (Healthy Working Wales): These are: Tobacco use, Mental health and Wellbeing Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substance Use, Food Health and Wellbeing and Physical Activity We will work in partnership with our Wellbeing champions promoting and facilitating healthy lifestyle behaviours through a range of methods and communication channels.

Goals

2021

- We will promote healthy lifestyle behaviours in line with public health messages, this will include online resources and workshops.
- We will partner with Ceredigion Actif, and establish physical activity groups: e.g Yoga, running, walking with the aim of to encourage and enable employees to be more active.
- We will create guidance on how to design, promote and manage physical challenge events for individuals and teams.
- We will promote local partnerships that can support healthy lifestyles to staff and students. These could include health clubs, walking groups, alcohol awareness campaigns and healthy eating initiatives.

2023

- Our healthy lifestyle toolkits will be available to staff. These will include

practical guidance on the six healthy lifestyle areas above.

- Staff will have access to a wellbeing questionnaire that provides them with information and guidance on the areas they need to focus on.
- Our online resources will be used by staff enabling them to make health and lifestyle changes and will sign post to additional support if self-help is not sufficient.
- We will liaise with local smoking cessation services and establish work based smoking cessation services for staff that are ready to stop smoking. Through our smoking cessation campaign in partnership with Help to Quit Wales we will make staff aware of the dangers of smoking and support

Mental health and wellbeing

We will be proactive in encouraging and supporting staff to maintain good mental health. We will sign the Time to Change Wales Pledge, to work towards removing mental health stigma in our organisation. In addition, there will be online toolkits, evidence based training and the implementation of Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing champions who will provide support and signposting to expert help and information. We will promote our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): Care First to staff alongside the provision of a wellbeing 'drop in' service.

Goals 2021

- We will create online Resilience and Stress Toolkits enabling them to access information when they want and need to, enabling them to be 'change ready' and better prepared to cope with life's transitions.
- We will deliver evidence based training around mental health, including Mental Health First Aid and health promotion to our network of wellbeing champions and provide signposting information.
- We will promote our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): Care First to staff alongside the provision of a wellbeing 'drop in' service.
- We will sign the Time to Change Wales Pledge, to work towards removing mental health stigma in our organisation, creating a Time to Change Action Plan for which will be embedded across the organisation.
- We will create a network of Mental Health First Aiders across our organisation.

2023

- We will have culture where more people feel able to talk openly about their mental health as they do physical health. We will feel able to disclose mental health problems without fear.
- Stigma around mental health will reduce as we work through our action plan following the signing of the Time to Change Wales pledge.

Culture and behaviour

We will embed workplace health promotion to foster a culture that enables support. Our wellbeing champions will be provided with health promotion training enabling them to promote public health messages in their work areas. We will achieve 'The Corporate Health Standard' (Bronze) awarded by Healthy Working Wales ensuring that we follow best practice.

Goals

2021

- We will provide our wellbeing champions with health promotion training enabling them to promote public health messages in their work areas. This will include signposting to behaviour change support and awareness in areas such as alcohol use, smoking, nutrition and healthy eating, weight management and exercise.
- We will achieve 'The Corporate Health Standard' (Bronze) awarded by Healthy Working Wales ensuring that we follow best practice. This is an evidenced based award scheme endorsed by Public Health Wales. We will deliver at least four health campaigns a year, focusing on key health initiatives.

2023

- Our health and wellbeing intranet pages will be dynamic, enabling our community to access health promotion messages and self-help tools alongside signposting to support both inside and outside of our organisation.
- Our Wellbeing champions will support people that are ready to make positive changes through effective signposting and knowledge of support available.
- Our Health and Wellbeing campaigns will be of high value for people to get involved with, for the benefit of themselves, their teams and for our organisation as a whole.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

Leadership Group

To support and champion the strategy.

To secure organisation-wide 'buy in' by endorsing the strategy and validating its importance in ensuring wellbeing and its associated benefits for both individuals and the organisation as a whole.

These actions will aid in overcoming organisational barriers, secure investment into resources, embed it in core business, prioritise it as a strategic investment and promote organisation-wide engagement.



Health and Wellbeing Steering/Working Group

The group will be part of the wellbeing governance required to aid the success of the Strategy. It will bring together key stakeholders across Ceredigion County Council and will include a representative from Leadership Group, Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer and Trade Union representation.

It will provide guidance and reassurance to all stakeholders in relation to the health and wellbeing strategy aims.

The group will not merely exist as a consultative forum, but will be established to ensure that significant actions are identified and implemented in such a way as the Council can demonstrate that health and wellbeing are being effectively managed as a strategic priority.

It will facilitate a focused approach to wellbeing which will foster innovation, creativity, productivity and engagement in our organisation.

Health and wellbeing champions

A network of champions made up of individuals from across the organisation will be established. Their role will be:

- to support the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, by promoting activities in their areas, encouraging colleagues to access relevant health and wellbeing opportunities, collating activity data, sharing best practice and stories of success.
- to foster a positive and supportive environment across the Council.
- to facilitate and document local wellbeing activity, working collaboratively with other wellbeing champions across the organisation, reporting to the Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer.

Line Managers

The role of line managers in the implementation of the Strategy will be key. They will need to demonstrate the value of the strategy to staff across the organisation.

Leaders and managers will be expected to role model wellbeing as they have a pivotal role in creating a wellbeing culture.

They will be required to utilise good communication and effective leadership to enable the positive change and a cultural shift to facilitate/contribute to the success of the Strategy.

Employees

The Strategy is not a prescriptive resource so individual employees will still have a responsibility for their own health and wellbeing as well as that of their colleagues.

Individuals need to be able to recognise what constitutes their wellbeing and the role it plays in enabling them to lead an enriching and balanced life.

Through the mechanisms of the strategy the individual employee will/should be afforded the opportunity to make choices which prioritise their wellbeing.

8 Measuring Success

Success is not one dimensional and there are multiple metrics, factors and aspects to consider within both the organisational and wellbeing context. Therefore, a robust process is required to continually reflect upon and review the delivery of this strategy, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data, and through continual dialogue with staff, managers and other stakeholders.

We will use measures and methods, examples of which are listed, against which we will set tangible targets, to monitor progress.

- A Health and Wellbeing survey to be conducted annually.
- The inclusion of specific Ceredigion health and wellbeing question(s) within staff survey.
- Staff survey and pulse survey findings to improve over the lifespan of the strategy.
- An increase in engagement in the Health and Wellbeing staff survey.
- We will use our absence data to create a baseline and report against this annually.
- Monitoring uptake of health and wellbeing drop in sessions and referrals to Occupational Health.
- Usage of the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Achieving Corporate Health Standard Bronze Award (in the first instance). Commitment to progress to higher award levels.
- Quarterly data collection from Wellbeing champions and Mental Health First Aiders
- Share our 'Time to Change' initiative action plan which aims to remove mental ill-health stigma.
- Once the Pledge has been signed we will then be measured against the action plan.